

WHOSE BABY AM I?—TWO DADDIES CLAIMED MARY ELIZABETH—JUDGE HAD TO DECIDE



BY NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

This is Mary Elizabeth, a little New York girl who had two daddies. And she didn't know which was which.

Neither did the daddies know, so they asked a Brooklyn Solomon to decide between them. And the Solomon, deciding between two fathers, did not cut the child in two, as some modern judges might have done, by awarding her for six months to John Webber and the other six months to John H. Phelan—the two men who claimed paternity of little Mary Elizabeth.

"Your Honor," said John Phelan, who tried to get the little girl away from her official daddy, John Web-

ber, "I lived with Elizabeth Dressler, the child's mother, for some time before the baby was born. She was born in my mother's home. Later Miss Dressler deserted me and married John Webber. But I have a birth certificate showing that the little girl was baptized Mary Elizabeth Phelan. Until last September, when her mother died, I contributed to Mary Elizabeth's support. She is my own flesh and blood. I love her and I want her. She is MINE."

The wise court, however, decided that the little girl belonged to the man who had married her mother.

"If you are this child's father why didn't you marry her mother and care